

Office of Educational Opportunity Programs

The Office of Educational Opportunity Programs was created in January 1992 to organizationally locate the MIT/Wellesley Upward Bound Program, the MIT Educational Talent Search Program (which operated from 1991 to 1998), and all future programming serving low-income community youth. The Upward Bound Program, which was created under the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 and is one of the US Department of Education's TRIO programs, has operated at MIT since 1966.

Upward Bound provides college admission and preparatory information, academic support, advising, career information, and college and career exploration opportunities to economically and/or educationally disadvantaged youth.

MIT/Wellesley Upward Bound

The MIT/Wellesley Upward Bound Program is a year-round, coeducational, multicultural college preparatory program for high school youth who reside in and attend school in Cambridge. Currently in its 42nd year, the program serves 75 academically promising young men and women. The goal of Upward Bound is twofold: to motivate client high school youth such that they persist on to postsecondary education, and, at the same time, provide them with the fundamental skills necessary for success at the collegiate level.

The following is an overview of the program's operational phases.

Summer Program

The six-week summer program, conducted in residence at Wellesley College, is designed to provide participants with a rigorous academic experience. Classes are taught by experienced high school teachers and by graduate and undergraduate students from MIT, Wellesley College, and other local colleges and universities. Each participant is required to enroll in a mathematics course, an English course, and an elective course in social studies, science, or world languages. (Through an agreement with Cambridge Public Schools, students may receive summer school credit for up to two major courses failed during the preceding school year.)

School-year Program

The school-year program, located at MIT, plays an equally important role in the participants' educational development. Building on the motivation and enthusiasm developed during the summer, the academic-year program is designed to assist and support the students while in school. To accomplish this task, several programs and services, staffed primarily by MIT and Wellesley College students (when appropriate) have been developed. We continually strive to maintain MIT and Wellesley College student participation through our continued involvement as a pre-practicum site for the Wellesley College Teacher Certification Program and through various outreach efforts.

The Upward Bound office is open for study on a drop-in basis four days a week. Tutors are available to assist participants with homework problems and to meet with individuals and/or small groups for specific content-area tutorials.

The program offers monthly workshops to address more specialized participant needs (e.g., SAT preparation, computing skills, study-skills development, time management, and job-readiness skills).

Also, in an effort to help participants cope with the myriad academic, social, family, and other problems they face, the program offers support in the areas of college and career advising, and personal adjustment. The college advising component includes campus visits to many local colleges and universities as well as to historically Black institutions, and participation in at least two local college fairs. In addition, the program hosted its annual College Day in July during the summer session at Wellesley College. Approximately 52 colleges and universities, as well as 12 visiting TRIO programs from the greater Boston area, were represented. The career-advising component offers exposure to career options through our Career Presentations Program as well as through research on the internet and follow up.

Lastly, the program provides numerous field trips, to such places as the Museum of Science, the New England Aquarium and local dramatic productions (on and off campus), as well as skiing, bowling, and roller-skating to further the students' intellectual, social, and cultural development.

Eighty-nine percent of the program's graduating seniors have been accepted into postsecondary education institutions. Students from the program's Class of 2009 will enroll in the following colleges and universities: Benjamin Franklin Institute of Technology, Bridgewater State College, College of the Holy Cross, Columbia University, Denison University, Emmanuel College, Howard University, Mount Holyoke College, Newbury College (two students), Pace University, Salem State College (two students), Suffolk University, Union College, University of Bridgeport, and University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

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